United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Three warring parties in Bosnian conflict, meeting in Geneva, agree to immediately resume talks on basis of plan presented by European Union; military representatives sign Joint Declaration confirming 18 November agreement on humanitarian access throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Security Council extends mandate of United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, supervising cease-fire and Agreement on Disengagement between Israel and Syria, for further six months.

+ Fourth Coordination Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance to Somalia begins in Addis Ababa; Chairman Jan Eliasson stresses shift from life-saving measures to rehabilitation; calls on donors to support priority activities of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

+ International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian People commemorated today; speakers in Palestinian Rights Committee stress need for international support for Israeli/PLO accords and for efforts to achieve just and lasting peace.

+ UNMIH unable to implement its mandate until Haiti's military leaders honour Governors Island Agreement, Secretary-General reports to Security Council; says United Nations efforts will continue but major attitude change is needed on part of military.

+ Secretary-General appoints Justice Michael Kirby of Australia as Special Representative for human rights in Cambodia.

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At a meeting in Geneva today, the three warring parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina agreed to immediately resume negotiations on the basis of a plan of action put forward by the 12 Foreign Ministers of the European Union. The plan envisages a progressive and conditional suspension of some of the sanctions imposed by the United Nations on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in exchange for Serbian territorial concessions to the

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Bosnian Government, and a "modus vivendi" in Serb-inhabited United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) in Croatia. The negotiations, which will last another day or two, will be under the auspices of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, who convened today's meeting.

Also in Geneva today, military representatives of the three Bosnian parties signed a Joint Declaration confirming the 18 November agreement on humanitarian access throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. They acknowledged that if that agreement was not honoured, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) would use "all available means including force" to get relief aid through. In a report to the European Ministers, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata had said that the agreement was not being observed, that hostilities had not been suspended and that the parties' commitment to ensure complete freedom of movement for United Nations and other international humanitarian workers was not being fulfilled.

In a message delivered by Special Representative Stoltenberg, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told participants at today's meeting that the Bosnian peoples could be spared further suffering this winter if those who governed them would exercise the necessary leadership and responsibility. An end to the conflict would also create conditions in which the international community could begin to help the peoples of the former Yugoslavia and their neighbours re-establish normal relations and reconstruct their societies and economies.

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The Security Council, by unanimously adopting resolution 887 (1993), today decided to renew the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for six months until 31 May 1994. UNDOF was established in 1974 to supervise the cease-fire and Agreement on Disengagement between Israel and Syria.

The Council called on the parties concerned to implement immediately resolution 338 (1973), which called for a just and durable peace settlement in the region, and asked the Secretary-General to report at the end of the six-month period on measures taken to implement that resolution.

In a report on UNDOF dated 22 November, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said that the situation in the Israel-Syria sector remained potentially dangerous despite the present quiet there. It was likely to remain so unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem could be reached, he added.

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The Fourth Coordination Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance to Somalia began today in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with an opening statement by Chairman Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. He said that remarkable progress had been made in Somalia despite the chain of events since

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5 June and limited resources, but that signs of recovery could be reversed if the situation did not continue to improve. He noted a shift in emphasis from life-saving measures to rehabilitation and reconstruction, and called on donors to support priority activities of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. Employment opportunities were needed if the militia were to be demobilized, refugees had to be resettled, social services had to be rehabilitated, and production and trade had to be resumed in a secure and stable environment, he stressed.

The Secretary-General's Special Representative, Jonathan Howe, told the Meeting that the emergency relief battle had been won, and that there were no more "walking skeletons" in Somalia. The country had come back to life and its story could have a happy ending despite setbacks and arguments. Admiral Howe said the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) was embarking on a policy shift based on four pillars. The Operation would now seek: to accelerate Somali ownership of the processes and the transitional mechanisms leading to recovery of the institutions of governance; to give priority for development resources to regions that achieved political reconciliation; to increase reliance on the Somali police for security; and to shift the emphasis from disarmament to demobilization of Somali youth.

In his address, Ethiopian President Mali Zenawi said all temptations to impose solutions on Somalia shuld be resisted, because imposed solutions would not work. He stressed that the challenge facing the international community in Somalia was humanitarian and political and not military in nature.

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The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was commemorated today by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. In a message marking the occasion, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said the present optimism about a settlement of the Middle East conflict must not overshadow the challenges ahead. There were still extremist factions on both sides who had contradictory objectives but a common interest in opposing the accord reached between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It was the duty of the international community, he said, to support unwaveringly the efforts of the Palestinian and Israeli people to achieve and preserve peace.

Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, said in a statement read out by Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer for Palestine, that the Middle East region was at a strategic crossroads: it could either move forward on the track of democracy, development and prosperity, or it could be pushed into the abyss of confusion, wars, calamities and balkanization. Keba Birane Cisse (Senegal), Chairman of the Palestinian Rights Committee, stressed the need for the full engagement of the United Nations in the peace process and the process of building the Palestinian National Authority, as well as in providing broad assistance to the Palestinian people.

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The United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) will not be able to implement its mandate until Haiti's military leaders live up to the commitments entered into under the Governors Island Agreement of last July, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report to the Security Council dated 26 November, the Secretary-General said a clear and substantial change of attitude was needed on the part of the military. He said he would continue efforts, with the assistance of his Special Representative, to bring about such a change in order to ensure implementation of the Agreement and the participation of the United Nations in the peace process.

The Security Council established UNMIH last September to train the Haitian police and to monitor police operations, and to modernize the Haitian Armed Forces. However, according to the Secretary-General, the Mission's mandate was "seriously undermined" by various developments in Haiti which constituted non-compliance by the Armed Forces with the Governors Island Agreement. On October 11, an UNMIH military contingent was prevented from disembarking from the USS Harlan County in Port-au-Prince, and on October 15 a decision was taken to evacuate the bulk of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH).

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Justice Michael Kirby of Australia as his Special Representative for human rights in Cambodia. Justice Kirby is President of the Court of Appeal, New Supreme Court of New South Wales in Sydney, and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Commission of Jurists.

The Commission on Human Rights, in resolution 1993/6, asked the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative to maintain contact with the Government and people of Cambodia; to guide and coordinate the United Nations human rights presence in the country; and to help the Government in the promotion and protection of human rights. The resolution asked the Special Representative to report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session and to the Commission at its fiftieth session. It also asked the Secretary-General to ensure a continued United Nations human rights presence in Cambodia after the expiry of the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

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